

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'  
MILLENNIAL STAR

ESTABLISHED IN 1840

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*"They were filled with the Spirit; and they did cry out with one voice, and gave glory to Jesus, whom they both saw and heard."*

BOOK OF MORMON, 3 NEPHI 20: 9.

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."* BIBLE, LUKE 2: 14.

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MARY—MOTHER OF THE REDEEMER

ELDER JAMES H. ANDERSON

THE Hebrew name "Mary" is most frequently suggested as meaning "Bitter" or "Sorrow." But its etymology is indefinite as to meaning, and it sometimes is interpreted "Patient," with more probability of accuracy than the other meanings, which have been given preference because of the bitterness or sorrow that came to Mary at the crucifixion of her Son on Calvary, but which application, logically, would be overcome by the joy of the resurrection. Other Hebrew names have a significance in the life-work of the person indicated; if that rule is continued in this case of one of royal birth, the most reasonable definition suggested by Hebrew scholars is "Patience."

In available records, the only personal description given of Mary, the beautiful daughter of the royal house of David who was destined to be the Mother of the Redeemer of mankind, is that given in a heavenly vision, had in the opening years of the sixth century B. C., and recorded in the Book of Mormon, a volume of scripture authenticated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, from ancient records obtained in America in the early part of the nineteenth century. That record (1 Nephi 11: 13-15, 18, 20, 21) says:

And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white.

And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou?

And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins. . . .

And he said unto me : Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms.

And the angel said unto me : Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! . . .

This prophetic vision of the Virgin Mary presents a picture that is justification for all those gems of art, Madonna and Child, devotionally admired by millions of the most intelligent of God's children. The prophet could readily recognize a virgin from the fact that he was familiar with the Palestine custom of women there clothing themselves in fashions of dress indicating virgins, wives, or widows, as the case might be. This vision was not the first knowledge of the Son of God as Redeemer, for that fact had been communicated to Father Adam (Moses 5 : 7, 11) and others after him. The earliest Bible mention of the Redeemer coming in the line of the Covenant Race is in Genesis 49 : 10, and Numbers 24 : 17. In the former He is referred to as Shiloh (literally, Peace); and in the latter as a "Star out of Jacob," this designation being by the prophet Balaam; for all of Israel's prophets were not confined in Egyptian bondage, even Moses fleeing to the land of Midian, where the people at first called him an Egyptian (Exodus 2 : 15, 19).

The verse in Genesis, forty-ninth chapter, indicated that the Redeemer and king of Israel would be of the tribe of Judah "according to the flesh," as the Jews expected. This heritage could come only through His mother, Mary being a direct descendant of David; her Son Jesus was "of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1 : 3); "according to the flesh" exists only in the parentage from Mary. Luke 1 : 32, states that He would be lineally of the house of David, who was tribally of Judah: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David." The Bible records that two blind men among the Jews (Matt. 9 : 27) on a certain occasion addressed Him: "Thou Son of David;" many of the people also recognized Him as such; and in the cavalcade on the way from Bethphage to Jerusalem "the multitudes that went before and that followed," and "the children crying in the temple," hailed Him: "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matt. 21 : 9, 15), in the literal family sense. In great part at least that was because of His mother's recognized descent in the house of David; for the historian Matthew knew the story of His parents, as did others; he knew that both Joseph and Mary were descendants in direct line from King David, and cited the genealogy of Joseph in his first chapter to bring Joseph into the picture, in the event of discussion, of which there may have been plenty.

Genealogically, we know of Mary's parentage; hence we also know of the human parentage of her Son. Matthew traces

Joseph's line back to David through Solomon (Matt. 1: 6, 7). Luke gives Mary's royal line back to David through Nathan, another son of Israel's old-time king (2 Samuel 5: 14). Both lines converge at Zorobabel, son of Salathiel (Matt. 1: 12, and Luke 3: 27), and then branch out again. Matthew (1: 16) says: "Jacob begat Joseph," that is, individually, Joseph's father was named Jacob. Luke (3: 23) says Joseph "was the son of Heli." How many parents to-day refer to a daughter's husband as "my son," and how many call a daughter-in-law "my daughter?" It is a common practice. The same custom was in vogue among the Jews. Heli was Joseph's father-in-law, and father of Mary. Joseph did not have two fathers, Jacob and Heli: but he had a father of David's line, Jacob, and a father-in-law of David's line, Heli, father of his wife Mary. A Scofield Bible note makes this clear and accurate statement:

In Matthew (unquestionably the genealogy of Joseph) we are told that "Jacob begat Joseph." In Luke, Joseph is described as "the son of Heli." He could not be the son of Jacob and Heli. The conclusion is inevitable that in Luke we have Mary's genealogy, and that her husband Joseph was son-in-law to Mary's father Heli. That Joseph in such case should be called "son of Heli" would be correct in Jewish usage.

Thus Mary was a princess of the house of David, and her Son Jesus is Prince of the House of David in its temporal or mortal sense; and also King of Israel in its spiritual or heavenly sense—the heritage from His Father, God; and ultimately His "kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7: 27)—in both senses.

Another family relationship with Mary is interesting and significant. All four Gospels record that after the Crucifixion, the body of Jesus was delivered to "a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus" (Matt. 27: 57, 58). It was delivered as asked, "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed" (Matt. 27: 59, 60). Mark says Joseph of Arimathea "went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus" (Mark 15: 43-45). Luke says this same Joseph "went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus" (Luke 23: 50-52). John says: "Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus" (John 19: 38).

These Bible statements definitely fix an important fact, namely, that Joseph of Arimathea was a close relative of the crucified Redeemer. Under the Roman law then in force, none but a close relative could obtain the body of a person who had been

executed. Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body because he had a legal right to its possession; otherwise he must have been refused. It was because of his close relationship that, going "secretly for fear of the Jews" who surely would have protested because of their enmity, he "went in boldly unto Pilate" and claimed his right under the law, and was granted the body of Jesus. Otherwise the body of the crucified Redeemer would have been buried as was the betrayer and suicide Judas, in a "potter's field." Thus Joseph of Arimathea, being a close relative of Jesus, also was such relative of His mother Mary. A well-authenticated Eastern tradition says he was a younger brother of Mary's father; he thus would come within the legal recognition given by Pilate. It appears, therefore, that he was Mary's uncle; his daughter Anna was Mary's cousin.

An old historical record says that when many who were closely associated with Mary and Jesus were forced to leave Palestine under threats of death, Joseph of Arimathea finally came to Britain (A. D. 35 to 38) and preached Christianity there. British tradition to this day says this Joseph was an owner of tin mines in Cornwall, England. Centuries prior to this time, tin for Solomon's temple was obtained from the Cornwall tin mines. These, and a small mine in Iberia (Spain) were the only places where the metal could be obtained. The close family relationship between Joseph of Arimathea and Mary, and her direct descent in the royal line of the house of David are definite facts uncovered in the Bible record.

More than seven hundred years before the opening of the Christian Era, the great prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom (Isaiah 9: 6, 7). He was to "be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." This and other predictions have been fulfilled to the letter in Jesus of Nazareth, thus enabling us to positively identify this same Jesus as the One who was to come, of whose "government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David," in due time.

There are few persons who, in history, can be identified in such manner. One of these is a woman (the only woman thus to be so identified), Mary of Nazareth. The prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7: 14) said of her: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" which, "being interpreted, is, God with us" (Matt. 1: 23). Isaiah's is the first scripture-record announcement of the virgin birth. No other scripture casts doubt upon it to the least degree. The circumstances of the birth and career of Jesus of Nazareth afford conclusive proof that the prophet Isaiah's prediction had direct reference to Mary. So, also, as to the vision to the prophet Nephi, nearly 600 B. C. Both the prediction and the vision were divine revelations.

In the Roman empire from Babylon to Rome, the closing days

of the Mosaic dispensation were tense with a peculiar desire for and anticipation of relief from prevailing conditions. In some of the countries or provinces it was hope for release from temporal oppression; in others a yearning for relief from a mythological, or a mental, or a spiritual depression, or from all three. In each locality the hoped-for change was expected through some unusual or supernatural occurrence to be brought about by the gods.

Among the Jews, the prosperity of their nation had passed away. Their country was full of murmuring, of discontent, of dread. The Roman emperor, not the king of Israel, was their sovereign. A secret hope was running deep in the hearts of the people for the coming of a great successor of the house of David to rescue them. Not only were there Jews in Jerusalem and surroundings who felt that way, but hundreds of thousands of such Jews were found in Rome, in Antioch, in Babylon, and their localities. The Jewish hope for a Messiah took form among other peoples according to the religious or pagan rites of the latter. The Jews heralded the words of their great prophet Isaiah that Immanuel—the coming of “God with us”—would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). Secular history says that among even pagan peoples this idea was so prevalent for them at that time that pagan priests had no difficulty in persuading virgins of the highest type that they might be favoured in being mothers of gods. Thus these assumed mothers of gods were of a considerable number. A knowledge of this prevailing sentiment, even among pagans who came in contact with Jewish thought of a virgin birth for a divinely chosen deliverer, will give some idea of the difficulties, social and otherwise, which surrounded the claim of any virgin to the distinction of being the particularly favoured one.

Nestling among the Galilean hills was the little city of Nazareth. Galilee was that section of Palestine to which, after the Babylonian captivity, they of the tribe of Benjamin mostly repaired, those of Judah choosing Judea. But some of the latter chose the vicinity of Nazareth. The family of the youthful Mary was of these. Doubtless, as a young Jewess with some knowledge of the prophecies she was familiar with the promise of a Messiah. But in her mind was no thought of herself being the chosen mother. She was espoused, that is betrothed, to a fellow townsman named Joseph, a man of royal lineage and kindly disposition.

It was in these circumstances that a message surprising and unacceptable at its inception came to this pure and beautiful maiden of royal blood. The angel Gabriel—the same who appeared to Zacharias in the temple—appeared to Mary (Luke 1:26). He announced that he was sent from God. He told Mary that she should be the mother of the Messiah, whom she should call Jesus. Mary was “troubled at his saying” (Luke 1:29). She protested as did Zacharias (Luke 1:18) by citing an existing

natural barrier (Luke 1 : 34). Unlike the interview with Zacharias, the angel avoided all rebuke, but gave an explanation and outlined a procedure which could not be followed or duplicated within human power (Luke 1 : 35), so there was no possibility of mistake in the divine responsibility. The culmination, said the angel, would be that "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The angel further said that nothing that was decreed of God was impossible to Him, and told of the miracle which had come to her cousin Elizabeth, which she could herself verify. The maiden was convinced. "And Mary said, Behold the handmaiden of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1 : 38). It was the province and power of God Himself, with no intervener.

The angel departed. Mary felt she must see her cousin Elizabeth immediately; there was no delay. She "went into the hill country with haste"—a distance of eighty miles or more—"and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth" (Luke 1 : 39, 40). Elizabeth was more than twice the age of Mary, and the relationship of perfect confidence seemed almost like that of mother and daughter. Mary had not ventured to tell her betrothed husband what had occurred; there was abundant reason for this. But she must trust someone, and who more suited therefore than Elizabeth, of whom the angel had spoken? Surely, no one. Between the two women there was a cordial greeting, but few words. Mary had no time to relate her story. Suddenly, without one informing word from Mary, there came this fateful scene as described by the historian Luke (1 : 41, 45):

And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost :

And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

And blessed is she that believed : for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

No recital by Mary could have produced such a result in the elder woman. To Elizabeth it was a wonderful revelation from God. None other could have brought such firm conviction to her soul. Who can wonder at Mary's relief and joy! Or that she burst forth into that glorious canticle (Luke 1 : 46-55) which has brought gladness to Christian hearts in all the generations that have followed :

My soul doth magnify the Lord,

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden : for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

A promise from God for the vindication of His people! The scornful proud to be brought down and sent away empty! The Israel who serve God to be exalted from their low degree! "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1: 21). How the resistless current of fulfillment is sweeping forward in the latter-day dispensation!

For three months Mary and Elizabeth abode together in a companionship no other two women have known. They then separated, Elizabeth to assume the duties of motherhood, and Mary to return to Nazareth, there to meet her affianced husband. Yet what of her? She had been away for months. In her condition she was open to suspicion as it became known to him. He loved her; but no protestation of innocence on her part could avail. "Being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, he was minded to put her away privily" (Matt. 1: 18, 19). It was the kindest and best course to pursue, from his human point of view. As to Mary, God alone could help her now!

And the God of Israel does not fail in time or season those who do His will. Mary had done that, and He did not fail her. He sent His angel with this divine message: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1: 20). Joseph did as he was bid, understanding then that "all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1: 22, 23; Isaiah 7: 14). His beloved Mary was to be really the Mother of the promised Messiah! And Mary's firstborn Son: Joseph "called His name Jesus." Miracle after miracle—the power of God beyond all human capacity—to Zacharias, to Elizabeth; to Mary, to Joseph; each act suited to the person and the circumstances, and so on to the end of the chapter! Mary had exclaimed to Elizabeth: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed," and thus it has been through all succeeding ages. It is the blessing of the mighty God of Jacob.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1929

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**EDITORIAL**

**A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!**

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**BROTHER**

JESUS OF NAZARETH brought to earth the message of man's divine lineage. He declared Himself to be the Son of God, and also that all men are the sons of God. Humanity is divine in origin, nature and destiny! This glorious truth was misunderstood. Stubborn Israel could accept no Messiah in carpenter's attire, and imperial Rome could brook no possible competition with Cæsar. Therefore, Jesus was crucified.

Later Christians, held by dark apostasy, corrupted this central Gospel doctrine. It was taught that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, but that mankind were created as a person might fashion dolls for his pleasure, and that this fashioning God was only a permeating essence of the universe, incomprehensible to man. By this doctrine of double error hangs much of the ugly story of man's unhappiness during the last nineteen hundred years.

A son is of the family, of the lineage, with rights of inheritance. A creature is the product of will, with no record of pedigree or claims of descent. Sonship and fatherhood imply personality in one, if in the other; and also that the one, however vast in power and achievement, is comprehensible to the other. Jesus spoke plainly, not mystically, when He said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

A nearness between man and his Eternal Father is established by such a conception. Man may then speak in prayer as a child pleads with its earthly father; and the answer will be one of a loving Father to His child. "Our Father, which art in heaven," is a phrase directed to One who understands and can be understood. The Saviour's last immortal prayer conveys the thought of an eternal family group: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

Every man has the same divine pedigree. Therefore, the human race is one family. We are brothers and sisters, the world over. How that knowledge should temper our acts! We may be of Abraham, an earthly lineage, setting us apart from all who are not so descended; but we are also of God, an eternal lineage, which unites us into one family, responsible for one another's welfare and happiness. The plan of salvation, conceived by a just and tender Father, is for all His children.

"On earth peace, good will toward men" sang celestial voices over the hill country of Judea. These gifts may be secured, explained the Christ, only if men will remember that they are a great brotherhood, descended from God, and engaged in one great cause for human progress. Christmas gifts to our own, of our earthly lineage, should reach, in sincere, loving thought at least, to our brothers and sisters, the family of humankind, over the face of the earth.

The spirit of Christ, the peace-giving, mellowing spirit of truth, may be realized, but only so, in terms of the eternal brotherhood of men. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

This is the message of Jesus, the Christ.—W.

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## JOSEPH SMITH

JOSEPH SMITH, the Prophet, was born on December 23rd, 1805. He called upon men to return, for happiness and righteousness, to the pure and unadorned doctrine of Jesus, the Christ. He pleaded with the world to cast off superstition and untruth. His message was not new; he declared only the validity of the old and everlasting one. He became a chosen instrument to restore the Gospel with all its gifts and graces. As we joyfully show our gratitude for the coming of Jesus Christ our Saviour, let us keep in memory and honour the greatest defender, during these nineteen hundred years, of the Gospel as Jesus Christ taught it.—W.

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## A CHRISTMAS RECIPE

IS IT possible to have a truly happy Christmas? There is certainly a wise and an unwise way to spend the holiday season. Following are a few suggestions for a "Safe and Sane Holiday Season."

The Christian world celebrate the birth of Christ on the 25th of December, and have given the name "Christ-mass" to the occasion. The members of His true Church celebrate His advent into mortality at this season; but they know His birth actually occurred in the spring of the year. Christ, His life and deeds, should be the theme of all the celebration centering around this season. The participation of the Latter-day Saints should be different from all other peoples, because of a closer adherence to His example and His commands.

Unfortunately, Christmas has become commercialized to the point of losing its real meaning. The family—every family—should have enough to eat at that season, and also some evidence of love and cheer from dear ones and friends. But the feasting and gifts which have come to be thought so necessary are such as

to sap the vitality, as well as the pocket-book, of the most vigorous and well-to-do family.

*Christmas Indulgence:* The father whose purse is taxed to the limit in the purchase of tawdry gifts for "show," acquires a dread for the season which should bring so much of love and cheer. The mother who is harassed to the point of distraction by the weeks of toil necessary for the preparation of all the hand-sewn gifts, to say nothing of the jams and jellies, the tarts and cookies, the indigestible mince meat, fruit cakes and plum puddings thought to be necessary at this season, has little energy left to even feel the spirit of the occasion, much less to participate in any real Christmas deeds of charity. The wage earners, young men or women, who feel that they *must* have money for gifts for So and So, "because So and So gave them such a lovely gift last time," often rob themselves of needed food and clothes to indulge an unworthy desire. The most poignant suffering comes upon the poor, who not only must do without many of the necessities of life, but who feel a deeper humiliation because they cannot do for their loved ones and friends all that others more fortunate may do for theirs. And to them the season of joy, misunderstood, robs the purse if indulged, or deepens the sense of injury, if resisted.

This is all wrong: Extra money is not necessary for a real happy joyous holiday season. All one needs is a deeper understanding of Christ's gift to weak, struggling, short-sighted humanity. Then could we return to the real meaning of "Christ-mass" and its expression in our celebration.

*A Recipe for a Real Christmas Feast:* Would you experience the real spirit of Christmas? Then seek out the most worthy and needy soul or family of your acquaintance, who may be denied the comforts of life which you enjoy. To them give of *yourself*—to bring to them some happiness at this season. One does not need gifts at Christmas time, except gifts of oneself, of thoughtfulness, and time for kindly deeds. Let it be a day of cheer, a kindly visit, a day of help in household needs, or a social hour, as may be needed most. If possible, some simple food for body nourishment and cheer may be provided. But eating is not the only way to experience joy; it is often a most unworthy way, and is always unworthy if the body is overfed—as some gorge themselves while others starve. It may be a good way, if the needs of body and mind are wisely considered and met. Let all be done as though Christ were a witness or a guest at the attempt. Then, if some spare time during "the season" be given to an extra special attempt to give the "light of truth" to those who still are in darkness, a real taste of Christ's joy at Christmas will be experienced. Will you try this recipe?

My heartfelt Christmas Greetings to you, one and all!

LEAH D. WIDTSOE

**BRITISH MISSION GREETINGS**

DECEMBER 25th is celebrated throughout the Christian world as the birthday of Jesus Christ. His spotless life, divine teachings and marvelous power have impressed all mankind down through the many years that have passed since He died upon Calvary. All who have heard of Him, even though they do not follow Him, recognize that He was the greatest Man that has ever lived upon this earth. His Spirit permeates all men. This is shown in the fact that at this season of the year we extend more love, tenderness, forgiveness and charity to our fellowmen than at any other time. A kindly feeling fills the air and each one of us wishes every other one all the joy and pleasure that can be had. This is a blessed day with all its gifts and rejoicings; yet, with all these things, it is but a shadow of that glorious day when Christ will come to this earth and rule as "King of kings and Lord of lords."

To the missionaries, who are proving faithful ambassadors of the Master, and to the Saints, who are braving the hatred of the world for His sake, I wish, most earnestly, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. To all mankind I wish happiness, and I would that they too would obey Him whose teachings lead to Eternal Life.

Now, let us rejoice on this day; but may all our merriment be governed by temperance and wisdom.

Cordially your brother,

A. WILLIAM LUND, Mission President

Dear Sister Workers of the Relief Society, M. I. A., Bee-Hive and Primary:

Inasmuch as the year is drawing to a close, I take this opportunity to thank you for the splendid work you have accomplished. I appreciate labouring with you in this glorious work. I am sure all of our Districts are improved through the diligent service you have given in the many different Branches of the British Mission.

My constant prayer is that we may all go forward in this great cause with our hearts filled with love for each other. When love fills our hearts there is no room for envy, strife or fault-finding. Love is the pathway that leads to heaven.

In the Church we are given the chance to cultivate both our physical and spiritual selves. Let us show our appreciation by striving more earnestly than ever before to move the Church to which we belong, onward and upward in eternal progression.

My heart goes out to you all, and I sincerely wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Cordially your sister,

JOSEPHINE B. LUND

## CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

MORTEN A. C. NICOLAYSEN

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
 From tender stem hath sprung  
 Of Jesus' lineage coming,  
 As men of old have sung.  
 It came a flowerlet bright,  
 Amid the cold of winter,  
 When half spent was the night.  
 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
 The Rose I have in mind ;  
 With Mary we behold it,  
 The virgin mother kind.  
 To show God's love aright.  
 She bore to men a Saviour  
 When half spent was the night.

PRAETORIUS (1571-1621)

The midwinter festival is approaching. It was once spectacularly celebrated by the ancients of the north in remembrance of the year's turning point to an earlier sunrise and a later sunset. The pagans of the Roman empire likewise had their midwinter celebration, which later, when Christianity adopted popular ceremonies, was turned into a commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Since then, we have it termed "Christ-mass" or "Christmas"—the word in itself meaning a special church service in commemoration of Christ.

It is a very sublime celebration, for Christ's mission and His redemption of the human family give renewed impetus for righteousness to the human heart; necessary, for every day this world's rushing affairs clutch humanity with terrific suction, like the power of a many-armed cuttlefish, to draw all away, if possible, from the higher spiritual inspirations of life, and deafen them to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

We have achieved much in late years, and have reached great heights in technical and intellectual advancement, but a "greater light" has come into the world, to endure. This "greater light"—greater than sunlight for souls—the power of the Holy Ghost, has come from the Father, the Creator of light, and has flowed through the channel—the instrumentality and service—of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the universal prophet, and modern restorer of the Church of Jesus Christ. We celebrate his birthday also at this season of the year.

The "greater light" spoken of, is embodied in the living word of God, which endures forever, when everything else in our present technical and intellectual advancement will seem slight compared with the coming higher spiritual progress.

Let us remember that down through the ages ring the indelible words of God :

For the preaching of the cross (of Christ) is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Lest we forget the source of our enduring salvation and power of God, let us take to heart at this particular time of commemoration, the second chapter of the book written by the historian and Apostle Matthew, and repeat with him :

And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda : for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. . . . And when they (the three wise men) were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts ; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

In oriental folklore these gifts stand out as supreme excellence in their symbolism. Gold is the emblem of the spirit. That symbolism is also applied in the "Nibelungen Ring," where gold is seen shining on the rock, symbolizing the universal spirit in its perfect purity.

Frankincense is the emblem of the pure body, which offers itself as a pleasing fragrance, attractive to all, to represent the sweet attractiveness of the Holy Spirit to righteous men—attracting them to everlasting life.

Myrrh is the extract of a very rare aromatic plant that grows in Arabia. It served in ancient times as an ingredient of the "oil of holy ointment" (Exodus 30 : 25). In its emblematic symbolism it illustrates the dedicated life, when man has extracted the evil from his soul and has become chaste and pure and dedicated to the more excellent spiritual life. Myrrh, therefore, very significantly stands for the pleasing essence drawn out of the experiences of this life, when man shall become holy and sanctified and raised up to immortality and celestial glory.

These three gifts are the keys to the higher spiritual life as exemplified in Jesus, the Christ, and in all of His true followers. The three wise men most likely signify the three races or sons of Noah : Shem, Ham and Japheth—and they become in and of themselves the symbols of the declaration : "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess" that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, and that the great majority of humankind will eventually, here or in eternity, be led by the true light from above to the Christ-life, and live it from within ; as Angelo Silenius says :

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,  
And not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn ;  
The cross on Golgotha thou lookest to in vain,  
Unless within thyself it be set up again.

This thought is also borne out in Matthew 10 : 32 ; Luke 17 : 20, 21 ; John 1 : 4.

There are in the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 27 : 13-22) words concerning "the cross of Golgotha" from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself. They are very plain in answer to the worrying question: "Why should the Son of God suffer for you and me on the cross?" In rejoicing and partaking of all the holy inspirations at the commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ, those words from the Book of Mormon should bring to us a deeper gratefulness for the ransom price our Saviour paid to free men from the bondage of sin. Being both the God and Creator of this earth and of man in the beginning, and here paying the price with His blood, Jesus now owns us, and will therefore, as promised by Himself and His prophets, bring us back to a more perfect "newness of life," under His special powers and provisions in the millennium. Therefore, the Apostle Paul very truly said: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." As Jesus said in those impressive words to the Nephites, there will also be years of judgment with full opportunities to prove humanity, and if they choose to love Him fully and serve Him wholly, as obedient children, they will receive the blessings of a celestial resurrection and eternal lives—the greatest gift from God.

In being spiritually-minded and in living the Christ-thoughts in our every-day life now—and enduring in them to the end—we shall escape living the inferior life of human stragglers and the environment which goes with it; we shall, by the higher life which we now build into our spirit-personality, because of the operations of unchangeable spiritual laws, be that much faster and farther ahead in pure spirituality and in intellectual and physical powers in that great day of judgment—we shall stand guiltless before our Father.

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### BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT CONFERENCE

THE autumn conference of the Birmingham District was held in the Handsworth Chapel, 23 Booth Street, Birmingham, on Sunday, December 8th, 1929. There was a large assemblage of members and investigators gathered to hear the "Restored Gospel," which is challenging the false doctrines of the world.

In attendance were Mission President A. William Lund, Sister Josephine B. Lund, and Elders Clifton G. M. Kerr, Junius E. Driggs, Wesley D. Amott and W. Kenneth Lund, from the British Mission office; Elders Henry J. Bates, Leeds; Elder Herbert W. Carter, Norwich; Elder Joseph S. Brongh, Nottingham; Elders LeRay Swainston and George W. Linford, Sheffield; Elders D. Wynne Thorne and John W. Adams, London; Elder Cecil H. Toone, Ulster; and the following missionaries of the Birmingham District: President Edward L. Blacker and Elders John W. Southwick, William E. Egbert, Lysle P. Monson, Lucian C. Reid,

Philip D. Quayle, J. Clyde Sumsion, Owen E. Andrus, Frank S. Campbell, Ivan E. Lauper, Therald N. Jensen, Karl C. Durham, Gordon B. Taylor and Elwood A. Gee.

President Lund explained the eternal life of man, and told of the use of temples and of the necessity of salvation for the dead.

Splendid musical selections were rendered by local members and friends. Meetings were held for the Priesthood and auxiliary workers in the afternoon.

On Monday, the missionaries met in the Handsworth Chapel with President and Sister Lund.

JOHN W. SOUTHWICK, District Clerk

## FROM THE MISSION FIELD

**Appointment and Release:** Elder Junius E. Driggs was appointed on December 6th to succeed Elder H. Grant Vest, released, as Assistant Secretary of the British Mission.

**Norwegian Arrivals and Assignments:** The following Norwegian missionaries arrived at Oslo, Norway, on December 5th, aboard the *Oscar II*; they have been thus assigned: Marvin M. Benson, Boise, Idaho, to the Bergen District; Herman J. Hogensen, Salt Lake City, Utah, to the Oslo District; Arthur J. Larsen, Fairview, Idaho, to the Oslo District; Clifford J. Christensen, Preston, Idaho, to the Oslo District.

**Releases and Departures:** The following missionaries have been honourably released and have returned to their homes in America: Roy Allen—Hull and Liverpool Districts—released on November 26th, sailed from Southampton aboard the *Olympic*, on December 11th; J. Willard Harmon—London and Leeds Districts—released on November 26th, William T. Shipley, Jun.—Liverpool, Nottingham and Leeds Districts—released on December 5th, and John P. Hopkinson—Birmingham, Nottingham and Sheffield Districts—released on October 13th, sailed aboard the *Olympic* from Cherbourg on December 11th.

**Arrivals and Assignments:** The following missionaries arrived at Southampton aboard the *Leviathan* on November 27th; they have been thus assigned:

For the German-Austrian Mission: Clark Archibald Gardner, Sandy, Utah; Melvin A. Ashton, Salt Lake City, Utah; Owen Morrell Clark, Farmington, Utah; Joseph Young Toronto, Salt Lake City, Utah; Emil Rienhard Wolf, Los Angeles, California; Merrill Edward Wood, Farmington, Utah.

For the Netherlands Mission: Milford Laverl Hall, St. Johns, Arizona.

For the Swiss-German Mission: Owen Spencer Jacobs, Magna, Utah; Ray D. Free, Salt Lake City, Utah; Melvin Woodbury Rodgers, Bountiful, Utah; John Henry Webb, American Fork, Utah; Merrill Budge Anderson, Logan, Utah; Garth Lavell Jones, Salt Lake City, Utah; Doyal Keller, Mink Creek, Idaho; Dermont Madsen, Fountain Green, Utah; Arvin Walter Morgenege, Idaho Falls, Idaho.

## A CHRISTMAS PICTURE

CHRISTMAS EVE: The snow was swirling  
Through the chilly atmosphere,  
Pushed and buffeted by wind-bursts  
To the pavement, bleak and drear.

Yet the stream of Christmas shoppers  
Lessened not a whit that night;  
But warmed with true Christmas spirit,  
Braved December's icy bite.

Little children, ragged, scant-clad,  
Scampered through the wintry storm,  
Glancing at the tinsel windows,  
Seeking Father Christmas' form.

Unprotected, blue and shivering,  
Stood the "bobbie" at his post,  
While the traffic milled around him  
Like an angry, buzzing host.

Mixed together, in confusion,  
Rich and needy, side by side,  
Squeezing, shoving, surging, shouting,  
Joined the human Christmas-tide.

Suddenly, the battling forces  
Through the earth to quiet stilled,  
And the Eastern Star, uncovered,  
All the sky with beauty filled.

Then the silv'ry chime of church bells  
Thrilled the souls of all who heard;  
Carolers broke forth, rejoicing,  
Singing—all profoundly stirred.

Forth the town clock spoke the hour—  
Brooding peace, the world fell on  
Like a prayer. The earth in silence  
Waited for the Christmas dawn.

WESTON N. NORDGREN

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BRITISH MISSION ADDRESS: A. WILLIAM LUND, PRESIDENT, 23 BOOTH  
STREET, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM

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## CONTENTS

Mary—Mother of the Redeemer	801	Christmas Thoughts	...	...	812
Editorials: Brother	...	...	808	Birmingham District Confer-	
Joseph Smith	...	...	809	ence	...
A Christmas Recipe...	...	809	From the Mission Field	...	815
British Mission Greetings...	811	Poetry: A Christmas Picture	...	816	

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